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No. NSDD 119

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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January 6, 1984

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 119

STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE (U)

The current strategy of nuclear deterrence based upon the threat of retaliation has been successful to date; but it is subject to a number of destabilizing factors in the next generation. The U.S. has actively sought to strengthen the stability and credibility of deterrence and reduce the threat of nuclear war through modernization of its strategic forces and by making significant arms reduction proposals. The Soviet Union's unwillingness thus far to consider true arms reductions, and its massive increases in strategic offensive forces have necessitated continued U.S. actions to preserve our deterrent capabilities. NSDDs 12, 13, and 91 establish Administration policy on strategic forces modernization and nuclear weapons employment and outline our continued adherence to the concept of nuclear deterrence as the means for protecting the security of the United States and our allies. (S)

However, given the uncertain long-term future of offensive deterrence, I believe that an effort must also be made to identify alternative means of deterring nuclear war and protecting our national security interests. In particular, the U.S. should investigate the feasibility of eventually shifting toward reliance upon a defensive concept. Future deterrence should, if possible, be underwritten by a capability to defeat a hostile attack. (S)

New technologies appear to offer the possibility of helping eventually eliminate the most destabilizing threat to the U.S. and its allies, ballistic missile attack. The technology and policy studies undertaken in response to NSSD 6-83 have confirmed that a defense against ballistic missile attack might eventually be developed and could play a critical role in enhancing deterrence. The Defensive Technologies Study described a technology program of R&D and demonstration which might eventually lead to a decision to proceed with development of a ballistic missile defense system. (S)

There is also growing concern over a potential Soviet breakout from the ABM Treaty. Evidence of Soviet efforts to develop a ballistic missile defense capability makes it incumbent upon the U.S. to do its utmost to acquire its own strategic defense

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options as one possible response to a Soviet breakout. Unilateral Soviet acquisition of an effective defensive capability would confront the U.S. and its allies with the real threat of nuclear blackmail and political/military coercion. (S)

A committed technology development and demonstration effort must be undertaken before any decision to proceed to engineering design of a strategic defensive system can be contemplated. I have decided to initiate a focused program to demonstrate the technical feasibility of enhancing deterrence and thereby reducing the risk of nuclear war through a greater reliance on defensive strategic capabilities. The following actions will be implemented immediately: (S)

1. The U.S. will undertake a comprehensive program to develop and demonstrate key technologies associated with concepts for defense against ballistic missiles. The technology plan identified by the Defensive Technologies Study should serve as the general guide for initiating this program. (S)

2. The ballistic missile defense program must be carefully coordinated with other strategic defense programs. The implications of a combination of active and passive defense concepts must also be considered. (S)

3. The Department of Defense shall manage the strategic defense program. The Secretary of Defense shall be responsible for the strategic defense program and is requested to create a specific management structure to implement the program. The program manager shall report directly to the Secretary of Defense regularly and shall be provided with authorities and responsibilities commensurate with the high priority of this initiative. The Secretary of Defense shall recommend the level of funding required each year to meet program objectives and be responsible for presenting the request to Congress. The Secretary of Defense shall periodically report progress in achieving program objectives to the President. (S)

4. The strategic defense initiative will place principal emphasis on technologies involving nonnuclear kill concepts. Research on new strategic defense concepts utilizing nuclear devices should continue as a hedge against a Soviet ABM breakout. (S)

5. The strategic defense program shall protect the option of near-term deployment of a limited BMD capability (non-nuclear if possible) as one possible interim response to Soviet BMD breakout. (S)

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6. The Senior Interagency Group-Defense Policy (SIG-DP), through an interagency program of studies, will continue its effort to define and evaluate the political and military implications of strategic defense for U.S. and Allied national security and will closely coordinate its work with the strategic defense R&D and demonstration program. (S)

7. The Director of Central Intelligence shall increase the emphasis on our efforts to assess developments in Soviet ballistic missile defense on an annual basis and shall also conduct a review of the adequacy of our capabilities to detect, analyze, and forecast developments in both Soviet ballistic missile offense and defense technologies. (S)

The strategic defense initiative shall be presented in the FY85 defense budget proposal as a prudent implementation of the recommendations of the Defensive Technologies Study report. Statements describing the strategic defense initiative should be low key and closely coordinated to ensure that an accurate picture of the nature and scope of this R&D effort is presented to the public. (C)

This NSDD supplants previous guidance regarding the strategic defense initiative. (U)

Ronald Reagan

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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January 6, 1984

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE DIRECTOR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
THE DIRECTOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SUBJECT: NSDD on Strategic Defense Initiative (S)

The President has approved the attached National Security Decision Directive on the Strategic Defense Initiative. (S)

FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Robert C. McFarlane

Attachment
NSDD 119

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